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RUEHAH/AMEMBASSY ASHGABAT 1864
RUEHKB/AMEMBASSY BAKU 1361
RUEHBM/AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST 0853
RUEHCH/AMEMBASSY CHISINAU 0381
RUEHDM/AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS 1498
RUEHSF/AMEMBASSY SOFIA 1021
RUEHSI/AMEMBASSY TBILISI 3019
RUEHVI/AMEMBASSY VIENNA 1530
RUEHYE/AMEMBASSY YEREVAN 1222
RUEHKU/AMEMBASSY KUWAIT 0816
RUEHRH/AMEMBASSY RIYADH 0582
RUEHMK/AMEMBASSY MANAMA 0176
RUEHMO/AMEMBASSY MOSCOW 5395
RUEHKV/AMEMBASSY KIEV 0701
RUEHTH/AMEMBASSY ATHENS 7102
RUEHNC/AMEMBASSY NICOSIA 6569
RUEHRO/AMEMBASSY ROME 6515
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS
RUEHVK/AMCONSUL VLADIVOSTOK 0086
RUEHDA/AMCONSUL ADANA 0658
RUEHIT/AMCONSUL ISTANBUL 0326
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS
RHMFISS/CDR USEUCOM VAIHINGEN GE
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RHMFIUU/39ABG INCIRLIK AB TU
RHMFIUU/39CES INCIRLIK AB TU
RHMFIUU/BDP INCIRLIK AB TU
RUEHPPH/CDC ATLANTA GA
RUEAUSA/DEPT OF HHS WASHDC
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 1464
RUEHAST/USOFFICE ASTANA 0087
RUEHZN/EST COLLECTIVE

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 ANKARA 002113

SIPDIS

USAID FOR TROSTLE, BLANCHET AND CARROLL
HHS FOR WSTEIGER/PBUDASHEWITZ
FAS FOR ITP/MACKE/THOMAS, CMP/DLP/WETZEL, FAS/JDEVER
FAS PASS FSIS AND APHIS
VIENNA PASS APHIS
BRUSSELS PASS APHIS/FERNANDEZ
GENEVA PASS HEALTH ATTACHE
ROME FOR US MISSION TO FAO

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958:N/A
TAGS: [TBIO](#) [AMED](#) [EAID](#) [CASC](#) [SENV](#) [EAGR](#) [KPAO](#) [TU](#)
SUBJECT: TURKISH AGR MINISTER ON AI AND WTO RICE CASE

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¶1. Summary. Turkish Minister of Agriculture and Rural Affairs Mehmet Eker, in a meeting with Ambassador April 17, reported that bird flu had been essentially eliminated in Turkey and thanked the United States for its financial support in dealing with AI. Eker also reported that with the next few days, the Secretariat for Foreign Trade would issue instructions on Turkey's new rice import regime. He expressed interest in the dropping of the US WTO rice case against Turkey. Ambassador responded that the issue for Washington will be whether the issues that gave rise to the US complaint to the WTO have in fact been addressed. End Summary.

AI Regional Conference and Current AI Situation

¶2. Eker commented that the recent WHO/FAO sponsored Regional Conference on Avian Influenza held April 12-13 in Ankara was extremely useful, particularly the participation of 6 countries neighboring Turkey including Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Iran, Iraq and Syria. He emphasized that Avian Influenza is a disease that does not respect borders. The minister underscored that Turkey had been as transparent as possible during its outbreak and had made an effort to share information with its neighbors. He also noted a willingness to help other countries in the region.

¶3. Eker provided an overview of the current AI situation in Turkey. He reported that the poultry sector is recovering and that there have been no new cases. The minister noted that consumption levels had reached 90 percent of normal levels, and poultry prices have buoyed to YTL 3.5/kilogram. To underscore this point, he said suppliers declined to bid for a recent Turkish military poultry tender because the price offered was too low. (In separate conversations, poultry sector officials have claimed that consumption has only reached 60-70 percent of pre-AI crisis levels although consumption has steadily risen. We also understand there are still sporadic reports of new AI cases in the bird population although none in any large commercial operations.)

¶4. Ambassador commended Eker for his and the government's work in responding to AI. He noted that a video conference between the Ministry, the World Bank and USAID/Washington would be organized in the near future to discuss AID's USD 1 million donation, as part of a large World Bank-coordinated

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package, to restock poultry in safe and hygiene ways that will ensure against a reintroduction of the AI. Ambassador expressed interest in Turkey's regional role. We appreciated its leadership role in helping organize the April 12-13 conference in Ankara. Recalling his own prior work in Azerbaijan, Ambassador suggested that continued efforts by Turkey with the Azeris could be especially helpful given the difficulty the authorities there have had in coming to grips with AI. Eker expressed interest in this, but did not respond substantively.

WTO Rice Case

¶5. Eker said that Turkey had lifted its Tariff Rate Quota for rice as of April 1 and that importers had been issued licenses since that date. He stated that there was no official announcement about the TRQ, but that importers had been informed. However, real next steps by Turkey would follow the receipt of a letter to MARA from the Foreign Trade Undersecretariat (FTU), expected in the next few days that would provide details on the new import regime that would comply with Turkey's WTO obligations. The "domestic purchase" requirement would be abolished as part of this overall package that would be fully implemented by July 31. Eker declined to answer questions about whether the TRQ and domestic purchase requirement abolitions would be permanent, but pointed to the new system that FTU would be establishing. Eker stated that his ministry was only responsible for health, quality and standards for food imports and that FTU was responsible for WTO compliance and the import regime. Eker asked about the possible suspension of the US WTO case.

¶6. The Ambassador expressed the hope that both countries could resolve the WTO rice case. He noted that USTR Ambassador Portman had expressed appreciation to Minister Tuzmen for Turkey's efforts, but had not replied to Tuzmen's suggestion that the US WTO case should be dropped. Ambassador emphasized to Eker that it is imperative for GOT to provide information on Turkey's new import regime that

give Washington full assurance that the complaints that gave rise to the US case against Turkey have been completely addressed.

Wilson